



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8


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Ref: 8EPR

JUN 17 2011

Brent Shrum, Editor
Kootenai Record
P. O. Box 940
Libby, Montana 59923

Dear Mr. Shrum:

The June 14, 2011, Kootenai Record reported on a meeting between the Lincoln County Commissioners and staff of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In response to that article, EPA wants to reassure Libby residents that the agency is committed to establishing toxicity values for Libby Amphibole asbestos to support its cleanup efforts within the community. We are committed to doing so expeditiously while using the best available science.


The Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) review process used by EPA for adopting toxicity values is by design extensive, but is progressing smoothly. In May of this year, the EPA briefed the community on the draft toxicity values for Libby Amphibole asbestos. We did so to fulfill our promise to keep the people of Libby fully apprised as this scientific process progresses. We will continue to keep the community fully informed. The review of the draft toxicity values by other federal agencies was completed the week of June 13, 2011, so the process is continuing as it is designed. After the comments received from other federal agencies are addressed, the draft toxicity values themselves will then be subject to public comment and review by a panel of independent asbestos experts.

Administrator Jackson and the agency are committed to the people of Libby. The fact that we took the highly unusual step of briefing the community on the draft toxicity values before their public release, and even before the inter-agency review, is a reflection of that commitment.

EPA expects this rigorous IRIS process to result in the adoption of final toxicity values for Libby Amphibole asbestos that represent the best science available. In the meantime, our efforts to work with the people of Libby to reduce risk from exposure to Libby Amphibole asbestos will continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Campbell", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

 Carol Campbell, Assistant Regional Administrator
Office of Ecosystems, Protection and Remediation
EPA Region 8

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